

Proposed Action Update July 2, 2020

Project Title: Easements for Four National Forest Road Segments in Inyo County

The Inyo National Forest Supervisor is considering providing easements to Inyo County for the maintenance and use of four road segments on the Inyo National Forest. The road segments may meet the intent and requirements of the National Forest Road and Trail Act (FRTA) for an easement. No new construction or change to road maintenance is proposed.

The easements would formalize Inyo County's role in road maintenance along the segments: road maintenance allows the public to enjoy the Inyo National Forest and allows Forest Service employees to safely access the Forest.

The four road segments, located near the towns of Big Pine and Independence, are shown on the attached map (Figures 1 and 2) and listed in Table 1. Easements are considered long-term, and the decision whether to issue easements for any or all of the four roads will be made by the Regional Forester.

This project has been reduced in scope from the proposal sent to the public in May. As per a request by Inyo County, the Forest dropped consideration of four additional roads that would have been considered for special use permits to allow maintenance and mixed motorized use. Inyo County is no longer considering mixed motorized use for any Inyo National Forest roads. The project is now simply to consider allowing easements on four road segments that have been maintained by Inyo County for decades, to provide a legal instrument for them to maintain and manage these roads, only for the purpose of motorized travel.

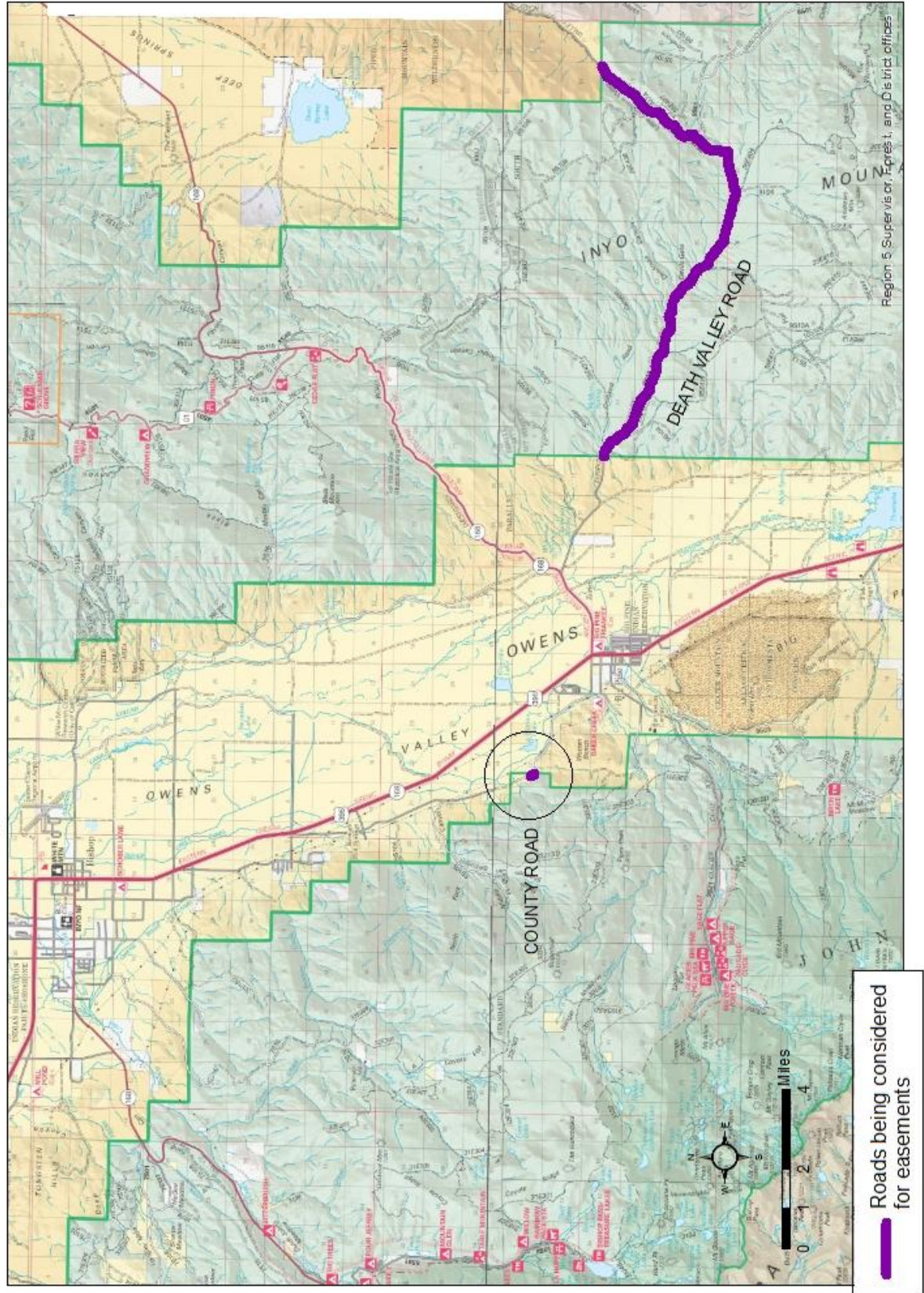
Potential environmental impacts will be considered, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Forest Supervisor expects that this project can be completed under a categorical exclusion (CE). Appropriate and legally required environmental studies and consultations will be completed before any decision is made.

If easements are given to Inyo County for these road segments, they will have control over the type of use on these roads. However, the County has agreed, in a Settlement Agreement with Center for Biological Diversity, that they will not rely on the existing EIR for any additional mixed use roads (beyond the seven approved by the County in 2015), and will complete a CEQA analysis, with public input, before making any decisions about mixed use. As Inyo County is not considering mixed use at this time, and have not proposed mixed use for any time in the future, the Forest will not and cannot consider motorized mixed use as a foreseeable future action and it will not be analyzed in this NEPA process.

Table 1. Forest Service roads under consideration for easement or permit to Inyo County.

| Road Name | Proposed Action | Surface | Miles |
|------------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Death Valley | FRTA Easement | Paved | 13 |
| County Road | FRTA Easement | Dirt | 0.1 |
| Onion Valley | FRTA Easement | Paved | 0.6 |
| Foothill Road | FRTA Easement | Dirt | 3.8 |

NORTH END **Proposed Action** Coyote and Death Valley Roads



SOUTH END

Foothill and Onion Valley Roads

